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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000152

SIPDIS

EUR/NB AND URE/UMB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/14/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: LITHUANIA TO REITERATE CALL FOR NATO FLEXIBILITY
AND SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE AT NUC

REF: A. SECRETARY 58

[1](#)B. USNATO 107

Classified By: Pol/Econ Officer Trevor Boyd
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Lithuania, probably through President Valdas Adamkus, will utilize the February 22 NATO-Ukraine Council Summit to reiterate its call for NATO to respond positively to the new political reality in Ukraine, to elevate the NATO-Ukraine partnership to a new level, and to urge the Alliance to provide Ukraine with a clear integration path. While Ukraine needs to consolidate its embrace of democracy, NATO, say senior MFA interlocutors, should be flexible and send clear signals to encourage democratic reform and promote cooperation with the GOU. Provided that Ukraine's progress in strengthening its democracy continues, Lithuania would be willing to discuss the NATO-Ukraine relationship at April's informal NATO ministerial in Vilnius. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) We met with Kestutis Jankauskas, Director of MFA's Security Policy Department, and Vytautas Leskevicius, of MFA's NATO Division, on February 15 to discuss Lithuania's agenda ahead of the February 22 NATO-Ukraine Council (NUC) Summit. Lithuania, said Jankauskas, is seeking a speaking opportunity for President Valdas Adamkus at the NUC to reinforce the message conveyed by Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis at the February 9 NATO Foreign Ministers Working Lunch (ref A). (On the margins of the inauguration of Croatian President Mesic, Adamkus is scheduled to meet Ukrainian President Yushchenko February 18 to discuss Ukraine's interest in integrating more fully with trans-Atlantic institutions).

[1](#)3. (C) Lithuania supports the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan, and believes it is too early to support a formal Ukrainian bid for NATO membership (ref B). The GOL believes, however, that NATO should recognize that Ukraine has entered a new, qualitatively different phase of political development. While it falls upon the GOU to consolidate and deepen democratic reforms, said Jankauskas, NATO should encourage and buttress GOU efforts by illustrating flexibility and sending explicit political signals of support as the Ukrainian democratization efforts advance. NATO, he said, can help the GOU harness "the spirit of euphoria" in Ukraine by providing a clear integration path following the NUC. NATO, said Jankauskas, should look for "serious progress" through incremental, pragmatic steps towards democratic targets. Should discernable progress be achieved in the coming months, Lithuania, he said, would be willing to discuss Ukraine at the April NATO informal ministerial meeting in Vilnius.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: In keeping with its self-image as a champion of democratic elements in the former Soviet Union, Lithuania will do all within its power to keep Ukraine on the West's agenda. Lithuania recognizes that Ukraine needs to undertake immediate steps to consolidate its democracy following the Orange Revolution. It believes, however, that NATO can decisively support these efforts. If Ukraine can make serious progress, even in small increments, Lithuania will continue to advocate for an acceleration of its neighbor's integration with trans-Atlantic organizations.
Kelly